

Message Text

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UNCLAS CAIRO 14106

FOR NOOTER FROM BROWN

E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: MIT PROJECT (DEVELOPING PLANNING STUDIES)

1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MIT PROJECT HAS REACHED A CRITICAL JUNCTURE. BECAUSE OF THE KEY ROLE YOU PLAYED IN INITIATING THIS PROJECT AND YOUR FAMILIARITY WITH THE UNDERLYING OBJECTIVES THAT WE HAD FOR IT, I BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT THAT I INFORM YOU OF CURRENT PROJECT STATUS.

2. AS YOU KNOW, UNDERLYING THE MIT PROJECT APPROACH WAS, ON THE ONE HAND, THE POLITICAL IMPORTANCE WE ATTACHED TO ESTABLISHING CLOSE PROFESSIONAL LINKAGES BETWEEN AMERICAN AND EGYPTIAN RESEARCHERS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS; AND ON THE OTHER HAND, THE POTENTIAL WE SAW THROUGH THIS PROJECT APPROACH OF GETTING AT THE CRITICALLY IMPORTANT PLANNING PROCESS OF THE GOE.

3. YOU WILL RECALL THAT THE USAID HAD SERIOUS RESERVATIONS AS TO THE LIKELIHOOD OF MIT'S BEING ABLE TO ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE LINKAGES WITH CAIRO UNIVERSITY FACULTY OR THAT MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT IN MINISTERIAL PLANNING ACTIVITIES WOULD BE POSSIBLE. AS A RESULT OF THESE DOUBTS IT WAS DECIDED TO DIVIDE IMPLEMENTATION INTO TWO PHASES. THE FIRST PHASE, WHICH IS NOW ENDING, WAS TO DETERMINE IF THIS PROJECT APPROACH WAS FEASIBLE. IN EFFECT THE FEASIBILITY
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WAS TO BE ASSESSED BY BEGINNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT. THE SECOND PHASE WAS TO BE A MULTI-YEAR ACTIVITY THAT WOULD COMPLETE THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION PROCESS THAT WAS BEGUN IN THE FIRST PHASE.

4. THE FIRST PHASE WAS SUCCESSFUL. WE ARE SATISFIED THAT THE DESIRED LINKAGES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED AND THAT CLOSE

INVOLVEMENT IN THE PLANNING PROCESS IS OCCURRING. THE PROJECT PAPER AND RELATED DOCUMENTATION FOR THE SECOND PHASE HAVE BEEN PREPARED AND ARE NOW UNDER REVIEW IN AID/W.

5. BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF OUR INITIAL OBJECTIVES AND THE FACT THAT THE FIRST PHASE ESTABLISHED THE FEASIBILITY OF THIS APPROACH ONLY IF MIT WAS INVOLVED, WE HAVE CONSIDERED IT ESSENTIAL THAT THE SECOND PHASE BE IMPLEMENTED WITH THE SAME U.S. INSTITUTION AS THE FIRST PHASE WAS. I HAVE RECENTLY LEARNED THAT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN IN AID/W TO REQUESTING PROPOSALS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECOND PHASE FROM INSTITUTIONS OTHER THAN MIT. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THERE ARE MANY INSTITUTIONS IN THE U.S. WHO HAVE AS HIGH PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AS MIT AND WHO ALSO HAVE EXPERIENCE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. HOWEVER, THIS WOULD ONLY HAVE BEEN A RELEVANT CONSIDERATION TWO YEARS AGO, BEFORE WE BEGIN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PHASE I. AT THIS TIME, ANY CHANGE IN IMPLEMENTATION AGENT WOULD BREAK THE LINKAGES, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WHICH WAS ONE OF OUR UNDERLYING OBJECTIVES, AND THOROUGHLY DISRUPT OUR GROWING INVOLVEMENT IN THE EGYPTIAN PLANNING PROCESS. IN ADDITION, SEVERAL OF THE STUDIES CURRENTLY UNDERWAY ARE OF DIRECT RELEVANCE TO OUR OWN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY ANALYSIS CONCERNS. UNCERTAINTY REGARDING MIT'S CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT WOULD HAVE MAJOR POLITICAL AND SUBSTANTIVE REPERCUSSIONS. NO UNCLASSIFIED

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MATTER HOW WELL SUCH A TRANSITION WAS HANDLED THERE WOULD BE A MAJOR BREAK WHILE IT WAS ATTEMPTED TO ESTABLISH NEW LINKAGES.

6. I THINK IT VERY POSSIBLE THAT MIT WOULD BE SELECTED EVEN IF PROPOSALS WERE SOLICITED FROM OTHER POTENTIAL CONTRACTORS. HOWEVER, IT IS MY FIRM OPINION THAT ANY RISK OF CHANGING CONTRACTORS IS UNACCEPTABLE FROM BOTH A POLITICAL AND SUBSTANTIVE POINT OF VIEW. THEREFORE I BELIEVE IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE SECOND PHASE PROCEED DIRECTLY WITH MIT.

7. I WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE YOUR REVIEWING THE STATUS OF WHAT I CONSIDER TO BE A MATTER OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE. MATTHEWS

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